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HOW TO

MEMORIZE MUSIC.

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# HOW TO MEMORIZE MUSIC

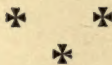
With  
Numerous Musical Examples



BY

C. FRED KENYON.

Author of "*Hall Caine: The Man and the Novelist.*"



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LONDON :

W. REEVES, 83, CHARING CROSS ROAD, W.C.

SECOND EDITION.

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To JULIAN CROSKEY.

*This inadequate token of my affectionate regard.*

## PREFACE.

*This little Book does not pretend to be anything more than an Introduction to a very fascinating, but little written about, Subject. I have to thank the Editor of "Music," for permission to re-issue the following Chapters.*

C. F. K.

Monton Road, Eccles.



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# HOW TO MEMORISE MUSIC.

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## I.

THE subject of memorising music is of paramount importance to all who have in view the concert-platform as a means of earning a livelihood; and even those pianists whose ambition does not lead them before the public gaze cannot afford to neglect this branch of their Art. Most of us have, at one time or another, witnessed the confusion of pianists who, on being asked to play, murmur gently that "they have left their music at home," and, on further being pressed, are obliged to confess that "they cannot play without their notes." Could anything be more humiliating than for a pianist of advanced technique to have to make an excuse of that sort? And yet it is being done daily by thousands of musicians who either will not take the trouble to memorise a dozen pieces, or do not understand how to go about doing so. Some pianists even go so far as to confess that they are utterly unable to



memorise anything; in cases of that sort we may assume that they have never tried, for all intelligent musical people have it in their power to commit a few pieces to memory if they only exercise the faculties Heaven has bestowed upon them.

I remember once hearing a lady of this description play at a "musical evening." She was a proficient player, she was mistress of an excellent technique, but, alas! she had neglected to commit any music to memory. She made the usual excuses, and then boldly confessed that it was not in her power to memorise a piece of music of even ordinary length. In spite of this, however, she was persuaded to go to the piano, and we were treated to the strangest jumble that it has ever been my lot to hear. She began with a Polish Dance of Scharwenka's, after playing sixteen bars of which she tackled Godard's second Mazurka, and finished up with the latter part of a Chopin Nocturne, and "a little thing of my own, you know." Needless to say, her reputation as a serious student of music was destroyed from that date forth, and she has never consented since to "play from memory."

Memorising music does not call for any extraordinary talent; it merely requires—like almost everything else—practice and common sense. If only pianists would realise this, there would not be so much cause for complaint. And if a pianist, in the ordinary course of his study, is able to memorise half-a-dozen pieces, how many more will he be able to master when he has given special attention to the subject!

Fifty years ago it was quite the custom for pianists to play in public from printed music. No one thought of calling them slovenly for doing so: it was

recognised as being quite the proper thing to do. But gradually a change took place. It began to be recognised as a truth that more pianists could play their music better when they had memorized it than they could when playing from the printed sheet, and then competition set in. First one pianist would give a recital entirely from memory, and then another; finally, it became the general custom, and those artists who, either through indolence, or because they had allowed their faculties to rust for too long a period of time, and were consequently unable to keep up with their more fortunate *confrères*, were allowed to drop out of rank, and the public knew them no more. Specialisation of talent may be carried too far, but it is possible for it not to be carried far enough; and the piano-playing of the fourth, fifth, and sixth decades of the nineteenth century would have been far more advanced! if only the element of competition had entered into it to the extent that it does in these days.

Pianists of former days must necessarily have recognised the enormous difference there is in the quality of the playing of those who are content to interpret their music directly from the printed sheet, and the quality of the playing of those who perform from memory; but their indifference with regard to their own improvement is hard to explain. For there is no doubt that there *is* a vast improvement in the playing of a piece when it has been memorised perfectly. I have heard persons contradict this, their argument being that, having once memorised a piece, one's playing of it becomes mechanical and indifferent. They aver that too much familiarity breeds contempt—or, at all events, indifference—and that the finer

shades of expression and the more subtle and elusive thoughts altogether escape the notice of the pianist simply because of his long acquaintance with them. I can well believe that this is the case with pieces of third or fourth-rate quality, but I must confess that I do not see how this could happen with the works of the great masters. *They* need constant study and playing before the pianist may truly be said to have absorbed all that is in them, for to him who is always studying, new thoughts will constantly be revealed. Especially is this the case if the pianist comes to his work with a clear and vigorous mind. It is astonishing to how great a degree the appreciation of good music depends on health. A vigorous mind and a healthy body go a very long way towards success in life, and this is particularly true with regard to the study of music and the memorising of it.

It is the ambition of many otherwise estimable teachers to obtain from their pupils what may seem to be the best results in the shortest time, and with this end in view they never take any trouble in attempting to instil in their pupils' minds the absolute necessity of their learning to play from memory. Pupils are left very largely to their own resources in this matter, the consequences being that the greater proportion of them never attempt to do anything at all. It cannot be emphasised too strongly that this neglect on the part of teachers is detrimental to their own interests; for what can we think of a professor whose pupil can never play the piano unless he has brought with him a bundle of music under his arm? But, quite apart from the pleasure that competent pianists can give other people, they ought to consider themselves as well.

How truly fortunate are those who are able to commune with the master-minds of music without having first to seek the paper to which their thoughts have been transmitted! It seems to me the very height of folly for pianists deliberately to refuse to store their minds with the lofty conceptions of our great composers when every opportunity of doing so is presented to them. Of course, it is not to be expected that the amateur pianist can commit to memory *all* that the great composers have written—that would be impossible! But it is within the power of all of us to learn a few of the fine works of our pianoforte literature, and if we refuse to grasp our opportunities in this direction, we are greatly to be blamed. And, besides, it is infinitely better to impress six or eight pieces indelibly on our memory than to have an imperfect knowledge of four or five dozen; for if a piece be once thoroughly memorised—by the heart as well as by the brain—the pupil will find considerable difficulty in forgetting it. The greatest care should therefore be exercised in selecting those pieces which the pupil intends to make his own; and further on in this book will be found a chapter dealing with the subject.

The present work does not pretend to be an exhaustive one on this all-important subject of Memorising Music. There are many points which must be decided by the individual, and it would be a task of super-erogation for me to attempt to lay down the law on every hand. It is merely my desire to point out the chief outlines of this department of musical study, and to show the uninitiated pupils the more important points to be observed. I have attempted no detailed explanation of the scientific facts which govern the



different faculties that are exercised when one is memorising music: that must be left for other writers. I shall rest satisfied if I succeed in directing the attention of young students to this important subject, for it is one that will well repay any efforts made to master it.

There are very few pianists who recognise the fact that in memorising music several totally different faculties are brought into requisition, and that it is only by the patient cultivation of each of these faculties individually that music may be memorised successfully and permanently. Thoughtless people—among whom the majority of amateur pianists may be classed—often arrive at results without the least attempt to discover how they have done so. For instance I have known pianists—and I must confess, they have been chiefly of the fair sex—who have succeeded in committing to memory a fairly large number of pieces without knowing, or caring to know, how they have done it. I recollect once remarking to a fair pianist of this description on the fact that she had done an admirable piece of work in studying Beethoven's "Appassionata" Sonata so thoroughly that she was able to play it without her music.

"Yes," she replied, "but it was hard work—very hard. And even now, when playing the Sonata, I sometimes come to a dead stop in the middle of it, and haven't the least idea how to go on."

"Ah, indeed? Do you rely on your eye, ear, or sense of touch chiefly?" I asked.

"Oh, I don't know, I'm sure," was her answer. "I simply played the thing over and over again, until somehow or other, I came to play it quite from

memory. But it took me a tremendous time—several months of constant study.”

This seemingly extraordinary confession is quite a common one on the part of those who have never given any original thought to their studies. If this particular pupil had only learned from a competent teacher, she would have discovered the fact that in playing a piece of music “over and over again,” in order to memorise it, she was merely wasting valuable time which might have been put to better use by the exercise of a little common sense. She had, it is true, memorised her music fairly adequately, but she had done so in a very roundabout manner, and, on her own confession, with very unreliable results. Mere mechanical work, however, is, by itself, worse than useless: it is often disastrous. Good pianoforte playing requires the exercise of independent thought on the part of the pupil as much as the study of Euclid does, and unless the student is determined to think out things for himself, it is better for him not to attempt to play the piano at all. To commit a piece of music to memory simply by constantly playing it over and over again, means, as a result, a mechanical style of playing which, to say the least, is not in any way pleasing.

No! Memorising music is not mere child's play. On the other hand, it is not a matter of extraordinary difficulty. It is simply necessary for the pupil to know “how it's done,” and the rest is patience and diligent study. But I must insist on the necessity for every pupil to think for himself. Do not be satisfied that a thing is so just because your teacher says it is. Confirm his words by thought and observation of

your own; if you find that your teacher has made a mistake, tell him so—you will most likely discover that the mistake is yours, but no harm will be done—you will at least know that you have had the courage of your own opinions.

There are five different faculties which, to a greater or less degree, are brought into requisition by the student who attempts to memorise music in the right way. These faculties will each be dealt with separately in succeeding articles, but it will be well, first of all, to tabulate them here. The beginner must not be alarmed at this array of work to be accomplished; one faculty only is to be developed at a time, and I can at least promise him that he will find the work interesting.

(1).—THE FACULTY OF TOUCH.

This is the faculty which the ignorant pianist uses unconsciously when attempting to memorise: it is almost entirely a mechanical faculty.

(2).—THE FACULTY OF HEARING.

The ear is an important factor in every branch of music, but particularly so in this branch. The ear is capable of being trained to a high state of perfection, even when the training is begun comparatively late in life.

(3).—THE FACULTY OF SIGHT.

By this I do not mean to convey the impression that by looking at one's fingers whilst they are playing music, one may assist the memory; but that by observation and practice one can see *in the mind's eye* a representation of the piece of music one is engaged in playing.



## (4).—THE FACULTY OF ANALYSIS.

We are all able to pull things to pieces more or less easily, but it is a somewhat different matter putting them together again. In this case the faculty of synthesis is almost as important as that of analysis. In order to benefit to the full by the exercise of this faculty, it is necessary to have at least an elementary knowledge of harmony.

## (5).—THE FACULTY OF MEMORISING ONE'S EMOTIONS.

This faculty is very often exercised quite unconsciously by pianists, and in cases of that sort it is undoubtedly a great help; but when the subject is studied thoughtfully, the help it affords is increased wonderfully.

Now it is advisable for the student at first to study each of these branches of the subject separately; when he is thoroughly grounded in them all, they may be combined quite naturally and without any difficulty. Later on will be printed a chapter devoted to "Methods of Study," and in this I have attempted to show how far it is advisable to cultivate each of these faculties.

It may be as well to mention here that the above faculties are used in pianoforte playing, though, of course, the greater portion of what is here written would apply equally well to the organ, harmonium, violin, flute, etc.

## II.

*MUSICAL ANALYSIS.*

A GREAT deal is included in these two words—they embrace the whole vast subject of Harmony, with its many complicated rules and observances. But, for the purpose of memorising, I have never found it necessary to go into the subject of Harmony in detail. The broad outlines should be learned, and learned thoroughly, but matters connected with obscure points rarely met with may well be left alone.

It is not my intention here to give a disquisition on Harmony; I am taking it for granted that all who read these pages have at least a rudimentary knowledge of the subject, and that many will have advanced far into the science. But before I proceed to deal with it in its relationship to the subject of Memorising Music, I should like to say something of the absolute necessity for all students of the pianoforte to study it. It is a risky thing when a young student limits the field of his study to such an extent that he excludes everything from his programme save one particular branch of the

subject he is attempting to learn! It is more than risky—it is fatal. Music is one of those subjects in the study of which there should be as little specialisation as possible; for the greater interest a musician shows in the many and varied branches of his art, the more likely is he to succeed. But to a pianist who wishes to be a musician, harmony is an absolute essential. In fact, I might almost go as far as to say that even the pianist who has no desire except to play a little better than the average, cannot do so without a knowledge of the principles of harmony. Yet how few pianists have any acquaintance with it! It is only those who have a love of music for its own sake, and not for the mere opportunities it offers for displaying cheap ability and easy fluency, that we may look for a deep and wide knowledge of this particular branch of music. But let me say here that not only is the study of harmony necessary in order that the student may memorise successfully, but it is necessary in order that he may do *anything* successfully in music. It is the ground-plan of every department. Without it, superficial brilliance with one's fingers is quite worthless save to give one a moment's enjoyment of gratified self-conceit.

A knowledge of harmony is a great aid to the memory, because it helps one to understand the piece one is studying. Harmony is the key which reveals the mind—if not the soul—of the composer. Without its assistance, one's impression of a piece of music is vague and inconsistent: at one moment it means one thing—at another, another. But when that harmony is understood, it reveals the meaning of much that was hitherto incomprehensible; it makes light that which was dark; and it unravels the knot of contradiction and

diverse statement. It is very clear, then, that it is an exceedingly foolish practice to attempt to learn by heart that which one does not properly understand, and every student who wishes to commit a small repertory to memory is in that position if he has no knowledge of harmony.

When a scientist wishes to understand the structure of an animal, he dissects it. With scissors, knife, and scalpel, he removes all superfluous flesh, and lays bare the veins, arteries, and nerves. He notices carefully how the muscles are placed, how they are connected with the nerves; he notices the manner of the beating of the heart, and the circulation of the blood; and from all this knowledge he is able to form a very fair idea of how the body is constructed as a living unit, how one part acts in conjunction with another; and, finally, the reason why this particular animal exists—the reason for its creation. And so it is with music. It must be dissected, analysed. Each paragraph must be separated from those which surround it; each thought must be studied alone, each bar, each chord, each note. Sentence must be connected with sentence, paragraph with paragraph, complete thought, with complete thought, until, at length, the work of art is completely constructed, and its full meaning understood. It may be asked, "But does not all this fussy peering into the nooks and crannies of a piece make one oblivious of its grandeur? If I want to admire a ruined castle, I don't go right up to it and examine each separate stone. Why then must I do this in music?" No, you don't look at each separate stone that helps to make an old castle, I know; but a ruined castle and a grand piece of music are not by any

means synonymous. You have, no doubt, at one time or another, tried to read Browning; if he has appealed to your particular individuality, you have gone on reading him, finding much to attract, and perhaps a little to repel. However, he has proved fascinating, and yet in your reading you stumbled across passages which you didn't quite understand. Their meaning eluded the vigilance of your intellect. You read and re-read, and read yet again, but still you do not understand. Well, the end of it all was that you had to analyse the passages in cold blood—you had to dissect them, pick out the subject, search for the object, and discover the predicate. And the result? Complete understanding, of course. And so it is with music. Train your mind to dissect—particularly passages that do not seem quite clear.

I have heard expressed by students another objection to this mode of procedure in utilising musical analysis as an aid to memorising. They say that too much familiarity breeds contempt, and that too close an acquaintance with the structure of a piece will destroy much of its poetry—that as soon as we discover “how its done,” we shall cease to have any respect for the work itself. This may be true enough with regard to the work of the lesser men, but I doubt very much if it would hold water when applied to the greater masters of music—their beauties are real, not sham, and just as a precious stone becomes more beautiful the more closely it is examined, so do the works of Beethoven, Mozart, Schubert, Chopin, and all the other glorious immortals who have given us of their best appear more God-like the more they are studied. But it should not be overlooked that in



studying closely the works of these men, one's mental attitude should be one of lowly admiration and respect. To me there is nothing more annoying than to hear a student still in his 'teens, criticising adversely some of the masterpieces of the pianoforte. Respect that which you study, and your respect will not go unrewarded.

Perhaps the most useful way to put this faculty of musical analysis to the best advantage is to play the piece over in one's mind when one is away from the piano—out walking in the country, for instance, or sitting in the quiet of one's study. To go through a piece mentally is not only good training for the memory, but for the brain itself. Each chord should be recognised and named, each arpeggio dissected note by note, and each rapid run played (in the mind, of course), slowly and deliberately. By mental playing of this description one has to rely solely on the faculty of musical analysis and if it does not desert one when tested, it may be taken for granted that it is developed well and truly.

However important in their various ways the other faculties may be, there is no doubt in my mind that this particular faculty of musical analysis is the backbone of them all. It is the trunk of the tree of which the other faculties are but the branches. It may be seen at a glance why this is so. (Musical analysis is a mental exercise, pure and simple,—the emotions have nothing whatever to do with it, of course. Even the intellect is liable, from one cause or another, to decrease or increase in its power from time to time, and it is quite possible for it to desert one's memory at a critical moment; but the emotions themselves—simply because

they are emotions—are still less reliable and even more changeable. One's intellect should always be the ruling factor in one's playing—the emotions should come a good second, for though it is a matter of the utmost importance that one should be able to feel, yet it is still as important that one should also think and reason.

When the faculty is developed, the student should learn to write out all his memorised pieces entirely from memory. This, of course, is not absolutely essential; but he who desires to study the subject thoroughly cannot do better than make an attempt at this. It is, no doubt, wearisome work copying out from memory a long Bach Fugue or Beethoven Sonata, but a moment's thought will serve to demonstrate how excellent a method this is—both for testing one's progress, and also for impressing more firmly on the mind what one has already memorised.

I give one example here to show the student what I mean by this faculty of musical analysis, and how it may assist one's memory:

Ex. 1.

BEETHOVEN.  
*Marcia funebre.*

The musical score for Beethoven's *Marcia funebre* is presented in two staves. The upper staff is for the violin and the lower staff is for the piano. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The piano part begins with a series of chords, followed by a melodic line. The violin part begins with a series of chords, followed by a melodic line. The score includes dynamic markings 'cres.' and 'f'.

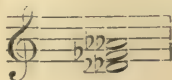
The last bar in the above example is not by any means an easy one to memorise; it is not an easy one to play, even, at first sight. But analyse it. What is



the name of the chord? Well, in this particular case it doesn't very much matter, for it is certain that it will not be memorised by that means. And the eye will not assist to any appreciable extent—for the chord in cold print looks anything but attractive and easy to remember. No; the ear, the faculty of touch, *and* musical analysis will be our help in memorising this particular bar. Well, suppose we play it. What does it all come to? Then notes correspond to the notes of the common chord of A major. Fancy: that complex, difficult-looking chord is nothing more or less than an old familiar friend. It isn't the chord of A major, of course; but for practical purposes we may consider it is. So, in playing the Funeral March of Beethoven from memory, when we come to this bar we should never be at a loss what to play—the words "A major" will at once come to our minds, and our fingers will readily play the correct notes.

I have purposely chosen an extreme example in order to show the method which the student may adopt when studying this branch of the art. Often enough, the most formidable looking chords are, when played on the piano, old familiar friends of many year's standing. I remember once seeing an autograph of Rubinstein's. It was this:

Ex. 2.



Very important-looking, is it not?—and yet only C major, after all. And so it with much of the most difficult music—if analysed, it will lose much of its dread complexity.

## III.

*The Faculty of Touch.*

IT would be a matter of considerable difficulty adequately to define the Faculty of Touch. It consists in the playing of notes in a definite succession, or order, without the aid of any conscious faculty. But the fulfilment of this definition is never met with in practice, for it is impossible to play entirely by this faculty alone: one other—hearing, sight or analysis—is bound to give more or less assistance. But for the purpose of explanation, this definition will perhaps serve. By its means the fingers perform their duty from mere habit. Accustomed as they are to putting forth a certain, but constantly varying, amount of force in a duly regulated manner, they may be relied upon, by the exercise of this faculty of touch, to interpret the music with a certain amount of regard to expression—that is, the *pp*'s and *ff*'s, will, in all probability, be duly emphasised, but the more delicate and subtle nuances will, in most cases, be entirely neglected. But the due interpretation of these less evident shades of expression

may be safely left to the other faculties, though the faculty of touch is no mean aid to the memory in paying due regard to the more exaggerated increases and decreases in the volume of sound.

Though this faculty of touch occupies so important a place in helping one to memorise even the most difficult music, yet because it is so entirely mechanical, it is very untrustworthy. It proves in practice an excellent servant, but a hopelessly tyrannous master. It can never be relied upon by itself; it needs other well developed faculties to support it when it is likely to fail. It is true, many pianists learn quite a number of pieces almost solely by means of this faculty of touch, and they are very often able to play them absolutely correctly, in every respect. But a time comes in every case when this faculty fails them, and they break down hopelessly—often enough in public, and their confusion and disgrace are remembered for many a long day. The reason of this sudden and quite unexpected failure of the sense of touch to do its work is that it is, as it were, based on a delicate chain of mechanism which connects one bar with the preceding and succeeding bars, and this chain is liable to be broken by the slightest untoward event. The creaking of a chair, the opening of a door, the rustling of a programme, are often quite sufficient to break the chain, and the result is confusion. If the sense of touch were directly under the control of one's will, one might hope to overcome this tendency to sudden breakdown; but as it is almost purely mechanical, it is utterly impossible to accomplish this.

The question may be asked: "If the faculty of touch is so very unreliable, and as it is a matter of the utmost importance that one's music should be memor-

ised perfectly, with no risk of forgetting it, or else not memorised at all, would it not be better to neglect altogether this branch of the art, and proceed immediately with those branches that will prove more useful? Before answering this question, it would be well to remind ourselves that this faculty is cultivated quite unconsciously in the ordinary course of our daily practice, and seeing that this is so, it would surely be somewhat foolish not to attempt to make the best possible use of it! And, to a certain extent this may be done with comparative ease.

The chief points to be observed in putting the matter on a sound commonsense basis are connected with the technique of pianoforte playing—the fingering of easy and difficult passages, the position in which the hands are held when playing, etc. A very important point is that one should be consistent in the manner in which one plays, it is a dangerous practice to cultivate the habit of playing one piece with two different methods of ✓ fingering. Adopt one method, and keep to it. Retain that method which seems to you or to your professor to be most suited to the capabilities of your hand, and on ✓ no account bother yourself with any other method. The reason for this may easily be explained. It is simply the old case of sitting on two stools. Choose one definitely and you will get a firm seat: hesitate, and you will be landed on the floor. The sense of touch is so delicate a thing that it would be destroyed if the hand were trained to play one particular passage in three or four entirely different ways. This point cannot be insisted on too strongly, for to my knowledge, and in my own experience it has often been the cause of discomfort and failure. Fingering has

nowadays been reduced to almost an exact science and if its laws are obeyed consequent success will be the result.

Another matter which requires attention is the way one sits at the piano. Of course, no pianist worthy of the name ever dreams of lolling against the back of his chair when he is playing; that is the result of mere idleness and indifference. I take it for granted that all students who read these chapters will know how to sit at a piano; but what I wish to emphasise is this: *always sit in exactly the same attitude*. Have your seat raised to precisely the same height whenever you play, and hold your body in exactly the same position that you are accustomed to. As I have said before, the least thing often throws one off the track when one is relying to any extent on the sense of touch, and it is only by safeguarding one's self against all contingencies of that description, that one can hope to make this faculty more reliable and trustworthy.

It has often been said that all true artists are more or less nervous when they play in public, and that they play a little better for being so; what truth there may be in this I do not know, but I do know that nervousness concerning the reliability of the faculty of touch is very apt to destroy the faculty as long as the nervousness lasts. When playing from memory it is disastrous to trouble yourself with what is coming next. Anxious thought concerning the next bar has no other effect on the next bar except annihilating it altogether. Above all things, don't worry. Remember that you have other faculties to support you besides the faculty of touch. Try to concentrate your thoughts on that part of your music which is at the moment being interpreted, and



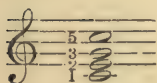
rest assured that the remainder will come all right of its own accord.

It will be seen, then, that though this particular sense is altogether outside one's power of will, and is apt to prove a deserter when its presence is most urgently required, yet it is by no means to be despised as an aid in memorising music.

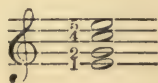
As a rule, it is developed unconsciously, and the pity is that this is so; the more unconsciously it is developed, the less useful will it be found when called into requisition. To make it less of a purely mechanical and artificial aid to the memory, and more of a practical help, is my aim in giving the following examples. In playing them, the student should take due note of the fact that it is the purely *physical* sensations of his fingers and hand that have to be taken into account, and that everything else should, for the time being, be entirely forgotten.

In Examples 3, 4, and 5

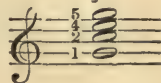
Ex. 3.



Ex 4.



Ex. 5.



it will be observed that the fingers occupy different positions respectively, and that in playing the inversions of the common chord they experience physical sensations similar in kind, but different in degree. And not only this—the common chord of C major will create a physical sensation of its own, and this is true of the common chords of each of the different keys. That is to say, the further one's hand moves up the keyboard,

the greater will be the strain on the muscles—not only of the hand alone, but also of the arm. A practical illustration of this is given in the next example,

Ex. 6.



where the tension on the muscles of the fingers and arm increases and decreases in proportion as the notes go up or down the stave. This, of course, applies to the left hand as well as the right, though in this case it will be seen that the greater tension is experienced as the hand progresses *down* the key-board. All the arpeggios, with their various inversions, should be practised thoroughly (no matter how well the student may play them already), and his attention should be concentrated entirely on the physical side of the question. In this connection, I know of no better exercises than the hackneyed "One Hundred and One" of Carl Czerny; but I do not advise the student to study these until he has firmly grasped the various physical sensations he experiences in playing the scales and arpeggios.

I do not wish it to be understood that the object of this careful observation and study is that the pianoforte player may, when performing a piece, call to mind in turn the different degrees of strain that are put upon fingers, and so aid his memory; that method of memorising would not only be excessively clumsy, but would in most cases tend to destroy all that refinement and delicacy which are so necessary to an artistic rendering of real music. My desire is that the per-



former should take due note of his physical sensations in order that his *unconscious* sense of touch may be thoughtfully developed, and thus made a more reliable guide in assisting the memory. Although so much conscious thought must necessarily be expended on the right development of the sense of touch, yet it should be kept in mind that, when used as an aid to memory, it should be used as sub-consciously as possible; in other words, when performing a piece from memory, take care of the expression—the soul—and the notes will take care of themselves; but when committing music to memory, too great an amount of application and study cannot be expended on this particular subject. The student may ask, "How is it possible for this sense of touch you speak of to help me when I am playing from memory, if I am to forget all about it?" This is a sensible question, and it deserves a sensible answer—for it does indeed seem strange that one can derive material assistance from a carefully-developed faculty merely by forgetting it. The reason is this. As I have already stated, touch is, in the very nature of things, a purely unconscious faculty; it acts free from the will, and quite apart from the mind. *But it is not cultivated unconsciously except to a certain degree.* Up to a certain point, the sense of touch may be developed without conscious study; but to be of any permanent and real value, careful thought must be bestowed upon it. Just as a man, after having first learned his steps in valse, must accustom himself to the individual peculiarities of the particular partner with whom he is dancing, before he is able to move about easily and gracefully without any conscious effort, so must the pianist pay due regard to the exercises of his fingers, in order that,

when called upon to do so, the sensations he has observed and memorised when studying a particular piece, may quite *unconsciously* suggest the notes that require to be played.

In order that I may explain myself more clearly, I will instance the opening bars of Beethoven's Sonata, Op. 2, No. 1:

Ex 7.

BEETHOVEN.

*Allegro.*

Throughout the first movement of this Sonata the phrases found in bars 3, 5, 6 and 7 recur over and over again, and nearly always with the same fingering. Technically, the phrase is not difficult; even ill-trained fingers will not stumble over it; and yet it is not commonplace. Now, in order to study these few notes with regard to the sense of touch, it will be necessary to take each note in turn, and observe by which finger it is to be played. Let us take the third bar. It will be observed that the fourth finger plays A flat *staccato*, and that the note is dotted; the second, third, and first fingers are ready in position above their respective notes, so that the triplet is played easily and gracefully, and the final note of the second bar is struck by the second finger. Whilst the whole bar should be

played lightly and with a certain amount of delicacy, it should be noted that the first and last notes only are marked *staccato*. Now, play the bar over to yourself several times, and you will notice that the most prominent physical sensation is that of *lightness*; in order to obtain this, an additional strain is put upon the arm, and the hand itself has a feeling of reserve force, whilst the fingers, by their actual position above the notes, give a sensation of compactness. If these sensations are duly noted and remembered, they will suggest the actual notes whenever the phrase is met with. The whole passage demands finish and clearness, and in order to obtain these qualifications, the fingers must assume a certain amount of rigidity, which they would entirely lack in playing a *legato* movement. Again, I repeat, do not *consciously* think of these things when you have once memorised the piece, and are about to play it over; they will come to you quite naturally if, when memorising the music, you have paid sufficient attention to them.

And now, on this part of my subject, only one thing remains to be said, and it is this: Do not attempt to memorise a piece of music by playing it over and over again without a thought of the physical sensations which its execution entails. That way lies ruin. It is not always necessary to observe each bar separately, for it very often happens that many successive bars will demand precisely the same kind and degree of effort to play them; but where the character of the music changes, either in rhythm, quality or quantity of sound, or technical difficulty, then it is of the utmost importance to discern the difference in physical sensation which these changes will bring about.

Before closing this chapter, I should like to point out that in many short pieces (such as Mendelssohn's "Songs Without Words" and Chopin's "Etudes," etc.), there is very often a homogeneity of technique which brings into play one particular kind of touch from the beginning of a piece to its close. Such a piece is Chopin's Study in E flat (Book I, No. 11).

Ex. 8.

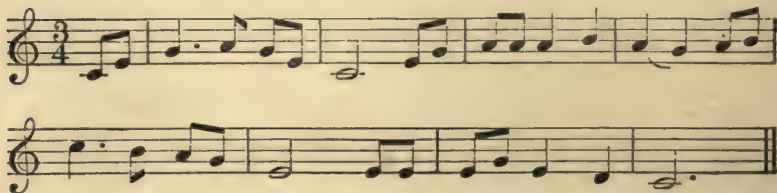
FR. CHOPIN.



All the way through this study requires an extension of the fingers quite unusual; but though this is the main point to be noted, it should not be overlooked that there are other features of less significance, but yet important. Do not overlook essentials; on the other hand, beware of wearying yourself with useless and obscure points. Work thoroughly, but do not become a pedant. Individual thought will be necessary on the part of every student when he begins to memorise a piece of music but he will not go far wrong, if he will only use his powers of observation; that is all that is necessary!

The following examples will indicate the method by means of which this may be accomplished.

Ex. 9.





The above is a simple melody, involving no unusual and difficult intervals. It begins and ends on the key-note, it is written in a familiar key, and the time-signature is well-known to all who read these pages. Let the reader hum or sing or whistle this tune to himself, without first playing it on any musical instrument. For the sake of convenience he had better play the key note of C major before beginning this experiment and hum the melody in the key of C major. When he has made himself familiar with its character—when the melody is imprinted on his mind, and remains there without any effort on his part—let him play the actual notes on the pianoforte, *at the same time* whistling over to himself the version he has arrived at through the printed notes. He will probably notice that the tune his fingers play, and the tune he is whistling, are precisely the same—in which case he may congratulate himself on having already overcome some of the initial difficulties which face him. If he finds that his mental version is different from the real one in two or three places, he should re-study the arpeggios and intervals already mentioned. But we will take it for granted that the above melody offers no difficulties that are not easily overcome, and we offer *Ex. 10* as a further test.

Ex 10.

L. VON BEETHOVEN, Op. 26.



This is a melody of much greater difficulty than Example 9. The key is unfamiliar, the rhythm is awkward, the intervals uncommon. Now, if the student finds he is able to understand the melody of this example by his mind alone, he may rest satisfied that he is fairly well advanced, and may commence the study of the next chapter; but if, perchance, he is unable to see any melody at all in the example except by the aid of the pianoforte, he should study many simple tunes in this way, gradually selecting more and more difficult ones, until his mind is able to grasp the full meaning of any melody merely by reading the printed notes.

The method of studying the sounds of *chords* has already been indicated. All musical people must have a more or less accurate conception of the sound of, say, the common chord of C-major; if the reader doubts the accuracy of his conception, let him test it by playing the chord on the pianoforte, and noting where and why he is wrong. This principle should be applied to all the simpler, and to a few of the more complex chords, major and minor. It is only by persistent testing of this description that the ear can be properly trained, and it is not too much to say that when the student is studying this branch of the subject of music, he should bestow at least one hour per day on it. And as his ear and his intellect become more closely allied, he will find more and more meaning even in long-familiar melodies. All musicians—and particularly all executive musicians—should have their intellect and ear so indissolubly joined together in sympathy, that what the intellect perceives the ear understands, and what reaches the ear is immediately comprehended by the intellect.



The memory of man is so fickle and inconstant that it occasionally happens that through excitement, exhaustion, or any other ordinary cause, the faculty of calling to mind a memorised tune deserts one as well as the faculty of touch; but it must be remembered that there are still three other faculties to fall back upon, and rarely, if ever, do they fail at once.

The sounds of chords must be memorised by the ear in much the same way as the melodies, only this side of the subject is more difficult to master. It is not, perhaps, so important to memorise the harmony as it is that the melody should be well noted, as the melody often suggests the accompanying harmony, and it is in many cases, therefore, unnecessary to memorise the different harmonies of a piece by the ear, unless the harmonies are very strange and peculiar. It would be well to study and memorise by the ear much of the harmony of Chopin, when playing that composer; this same remark applies also to those modern composers who are noted for their originality in harmonic invention. But this special department of the art is best studied in conjunction with Chapter VI., which deals with the subject of Musical Analysis.

## IV.

*The Faculty of Hearing.*

TO the musician the ear is all important. It is the *sine quâ non* of all that he does. Let him lose his hearing, and he is helpless; compositions may not cease to come from his pen, but the joy of creation will be greatly spoiled by the constant thought that, do what he may, he will never be able to hear the result of his labours. But strange as it may appear at first, the man who possesses the most keenly sensitive ear, is not necessarily the best musician. Intellectual capacity, temperament, originality, and power of interpretation are each of them more or less necessary to the musician who desires to be above the common herd, and these are things that cannot be acquired. And a good ear is likewise a thing one is born with; though, of course, a defective ear may be trained and educated until it becomes more sensitive to the subtler differences between the pitch and between the volume of different sounds. Still, a naturally perfect ear is a far better possession than one that has had to undergo years

of patient training before it has been able to reach a high state of perfection.

In order that I may illustrate my statement that a good ear does not necessarily make a good musician, I will mention the case of a young man who came under my notice a short time ago. He was nineteen years of age, and his parents had spent no inconsiderable amount of money on his musical education. He had a certain amount of technique, and among other of his pieces, he could play half-a-dozen of Mendelssohn's "Songs Without Words." This was the result of five years' tuition and daily practice. He had always found it a great bore to practise the piano, and very rarely touched it for his own pleasure. But he had an excellent ear, not only being easily able to distinguish a particular note when played on a instrument out of his sight, but also correctly naming the simpler chords and their inversions when struck upon the piano. It was to him a matter of no difficulty whatever to play a tune that he had heard casually in the street, and that was the kind of playing he liked best. And yet, in spite of this unusual and pleasing gift, he never performed on his instrument without making me and others feel almost ill. His touch was heavy and lifeless; his ideas of time and rhythm were conspicuous by their absence; and expression and soul were absolutely *nil*. He played like a machine that requires oiling. The notes themselves were correctly played, but everything else was as wrong as it could be. I occasionally heard of people envying his ability to retain a fresh tune in his memory, and he certainly had a wonderful gift for doing that; but he had not the musical temperament. . . . . It will thus be seen

that it is possible for an excellent ear to be placed in conjunction with an execrable temperament.

But this "intelligence of the ear," if I may coin a phrase, is a great boon to musicians. All of them possess it to a certain extent, but there is quite a large number of otherwise excellent musicians who do not possess the sense of "absolute pitch," and are not able to retain a melody in their memory until they have heard it over and over again. They possess "temperament" and great power of interpretation; perhaps; but they have not the keenness of ear which many of their less gifted brethren possess.

Now, in memorising music, it is very necessary that the ear should be well trained, and those pianists who are conscious of having either defective ears, or ears that are not as ready as they might be to note what they hear, should see to it that these defects are remedied.

In order that the ear may be put to the best possible use in memorising music, it is not only necessary that it should be able to retain for an indefinite period a melody once learned, but that it should (with the assistance of the intellect, of course) be able to comprehend and remember a tune heard once only. The ability to do this is somewhat rare. The usefulness of it is evinced in that if a pianist can remember a melody after hearing it once, he is in a far better position to imprint it on his mind indelibly after study, than the pianist who finds it necessary to hear a melody twenty or thirty times before he is sure of having grasped its full meaning. Nowadays, a new and really striking melody is rarely heard: they all seem to have been used up. Modern composers have

to call all the wonderful resources of harmony to their aid to cover their weakness in inventing melody. It is easy enough, I know, to write sentimental little tunes, pretty and charming in themselves, I do not doubt, but possessing no particular character or individuality. And this comparative sameness in much of the melody of the present day is undoubtedly the reason why so few people are able to grasp a tune at its first hearing; it bears so many distinct resemblances to other tunes they have heard, that it gets inextricably mingled with them, and it is almost an impossibility to separate it. The only way by means of which this may be obviated is to refuse to listen to the trash that is dinned into our ears day by day, and to study only the works of the great composers. By "trash" I do not necessarily mean "light" music, for light music is very often of excellent quality; but I mean so-called music that is vulgar and pretentious, possessing no merit, and savouring very strongly of the music-hall. Avoid, then, all music of this kind. Welcome pure, fresh melodies as you welcome the sunlight; study them; find out how they are constructed; feel their emotion; dwell on them in your mind when you are away from your pianoforte; and as a result of all this, you will gradually be able to grasp the meaning and emotional force of a good melody the very first time you hear it.

It is also a matter of first rate importance that the pianist should be in a position to transfer a melody in his mind into the actual sound of the pianoforte. Unless one has been blessed with this gift by nature, it will be found a somewhat difficult thing to do. The reason of its importance may be seen when you think of how easily the constant difficulty may be overcome



in playing a piece of music from memory when the sense of touch deserts one utterly, and one has nothing left to guide one but the continuation of the melody which lingers in one's mind, but not in one's fingers; in cases of this kind—and, with some pianists, there are very many—this power of transposing thought into sound cannot be too highly estimated. It saves one from an embarrassing breakdown, and even when there is not much occasion for its use, it gives one confidence and courage.

The cultivation of this faculty may be carried out in the following way. First of all, it is necessary that you should test yourself to find out whether or not you possess this power, and if you do, to what extent. Take any ordinary melody which you have had in your mind for some months, and which you have occasionally sung or hummed to yourself, but of which you have never seen the printed music, and which you have never tried to play on the pianoforte. For preference take a simple tune beginning and ending on the tonic—say a hymn-tune, or a simple song sung in the streets. Then go to the piano, and try to play the melody without any harmonisation whatever. If you play it from beginning to end with only two or three mistakes, you may rest assured that you possess the faculty in a fairly well-developed condition; but if you find that you are constantly stumbling over every other note, then you will know that Nature has not gifted you with this faculty, and that a certain amount of hard but pleasant work is before you. At first the power to play unpractised, but well-known, melodies from ear, as it is called, will come rather slowly; but after a few week's study of, say, half-an-hour a day, you will have made



considerable advance, and you will take great delight in examining this new and fascinating form of playing. ✓

• A great help in acquiring the ability to play from ear is to sing or hum the melody whilst you are attempting to pick it out on the pianoforte. You will thus be constantly putting a check on yourself, and will be able to compare the difference in pitch between the note you have played and the note you ought to have played. • Learn to sing the chromatic scale, ascending and descending; • learn also to sing arpeggios of the common chord (major and minor), the dominant seventh, etc., etc. • Learn the simpler intervals, and sing them over to yourself when you play them on the pianoforte. Test your development day by day, and do not be discouraged if you progress but slowly at first. I have no great faith in most every day proverbs and sayings, but at the risk of uttering an obvious platitude, I must earnestly encourage all young students to be, in this matter at any rate, *slow and sure*. It is of paramount importance that the student should be able to play from ear to some extent, and it is not advisable to desert the subject until its elements are mastered. The ability to play from ear is very useful in other departments of music besides that of playing from memory, and if it requires hard work to acquire it, it must be remembered that it is well worth any trouble that may be expended on it, and has many and diverse rewards for him who masters it. When the student is able to play from ear, he should turn his attention to another branch of this same subject. To transfer sound from the ear to the instrument is not really a difficult matter, but to transfer sound from the printed page to the ear, without the intermediary of the piano, requires more careful study.

## V.

*The Faculty of Sight.*

THIS faculty consists in being able, while one is actually performing, to see the printed page *in the mind's eye* by a mere effort of the will. There are few people who have this faculty, and I have only come across two or three pianists who possessed it in such a highly developed state that it was of material assistance to them in memorising music. I know one famous English pianist who declares that he relies chiefly on this faculty—relies on it more than all the others put together, and he is able to play more than 800 pieces from memory. He has the most extensive repertory of any musician I have ever heard of in past or present history. The eight hundred pieces include nearly all Beethoven's Sonatas, a large number of the works of Chopin, Schumann, and Schubert, and many pieces of Bach, Handel, and Weber, with studies of Arensky, Tschaikowsky, Grieg, and other modern men. This is not at all an exaggeration, for in English musical circles it is well known that Mr. Frederick Dawson has the most

stupendous musical memory of any man living. I myself have tested his ability in this direction; I have sat down and named piece after piece until I was tired, and Mr. Dawson has played them all without a moment's hesitation. And the most wonderful part of it all is that he plays them all mainly by the eye's power to memorise alone. I can very well believe he has all his other faculties developed much better than the ordinary pianist; but yet, to him, the eye is the organ that retains the music that he has memorised. As soon as he sits down to play, his eye pictures an exact copy of the music from which he has learned the particular piece he is interpreting; and he does this without his being forced to close his eyes. He keeps them open all the time, but sees nothing but his music. A strange faculty, truly! It is almost weird.

It will be seen from what has already been said that this faculty of sight is far more likely to be of use to those who are by nature carefully observant than to those who never see anything at which they look. The power to observe is difficult to acquire. When one has gone through life for years and years observing only those particular things which have interested one, and taking no note of ordinary things in the street and in the country, it is a great task to turn round and say, "I will note everything I see carefully, so that when I am away from it I shall remember it in every detail." At least, it is a great task to act up to this determination: the actual saying of it is easy enough. A habit that one has cultivated for years is not so easily broken off: it becomes part of one's very nature, and it is next to impossible to cast it off so that its influence shall never be felt. I am therefore inclined to say to those

who have never trained themselves to observe, and who are not naturally able to impress their minds with what their eyes have dwelt upon, "Leave this subject of memorising by the eye until you have mastered the other chapters of the present work, and then begin to learn to observe things that you come across in your everyday duties. Study Nature as she is to be seen in the country around you, for in this way not only will your mind be refreshed and strengthened, but you will also learn to observe and remember things—at first, for the sake of their beauty, and then because all knowledge is both valuable and interesting."

I have within my acquaintance several people of deep knowledge and high attainments in music, but of all other subjects they are absolutely ignorant. Mention the latest popular novel, or the present political struggle, and they look at you with wide-open eyes, wondering what on earth you are talking about. This particular form of ignorance is not so much due to lack of observation as inability to take an intelligent interest in matters outside one's own immediate sphere of action. But there *is* a lack of observation in many otherwise exceedingly clever people. I think most of us will have come across people who are unable to tell the difference between a swallow and a sparrow, a moth and a butterfly, and—this is perhaps an exaggeration—a sheep and a goat. To exclude Nature from our observation, altogether would, if carried too far, make one a monomaniac.

But the students I wish to refer to more particularly now are those who have failed to observe, *not* because they lack interest or are essentially ignorant, but simply because Nature has not endowed them with this par-



ticular faculty, for it is a faculty and nothing else. They have not noticed that many people are, almost at every moment of their lives, watchful and observant, and, not seeing this, the consequence has been that they have not been aware that there *was* such a faculty as this of observation. Their case is not by any means so hopeless as is the case of those mentioned above, who are unobservant chiefly because their sympathies are narrow and limited. But I take it that all my readers have fairly wide sympathies, that they have interest in other things besides music, and that Nature is to them a fit subject for admiration and study. Having learned to observe interesting objects in Nature, try to form mental pictures of these objects when you are away from them. Notice their shape and colour, and think of them and *see* them when they are no longer in your sight. By this means you will come to observe accurately, and observation in one field of thought leads to observation in another.

In memorising music by the eye, it is necessary that standard editions should be used in order that that which the eye retains should be retained in its clearest and most explicit form. Clear printing is an essential. The more distinct the printed music, the more distinct will be one's mental image of it.

But it is one thing to observe closely and remember what one has seen, and quite another thing to call up a complete mental picture of this when one requires it. The latter requires a great deal of concentration and also a fair amount of imagination. To keep it up for any length of time, causes a great strain on the nerves, but I have known people who are able to call up a mental picture without the least conscious effort.



To those who habitually observe things around them and remember what they see, I would say: "You possess this power of memorising by the eye already if you are able to visualize what is in your memory, and if you cannot do this, you will be able to do it with practice." In fact, practice is everything.

It is impossible to lay down any strict rules regarding a particular method of study for acquiring this faculty. Again I must repeat, close observation is the great essential. I will give a few more or less extreme examples in order to show the broad lines in which the uninitiated student may direct his work. In the first place, it will be well to attempt the visual memorising of a piece which, on the printed page, attracts and arrests the eye. A piece which is deliberately eccentric or strikingly original will very often bear the imprint of its true nature on its very appearance. For instance, Chopin's Etude, Op. 25, No. 4, is sufficiently uncommon in appearance to make the beholder exclaim: "I should like to hear that piece played. I wonder what it sounds like!"

EX. II.



The above three bars will be sufficient in themselves to show the student what is meant by visual memoris-

ing. Let him study them with his eye alone. Let him gaze long and earnestly, bar by bar, noticing the peculiarities common to each; let him perceive why this particular study looks so individual and characteristic; and then let him close his eyes and attempt to call up a mental image of what he has been studying. This method of procedure, repeated time after time will gradually bring about the desired result—will, in short, teach him to make an unconscious practice of observing with his eyes as well as with his ears and intellect.

The following are a few more examples of characteristic pieces, the more individual points of which the eye will at once perceive and take note of.

## Ex. 12.

*Allegro non troppo.  
Legato.*

CHOPIN.  
Op. 24, No. 2.

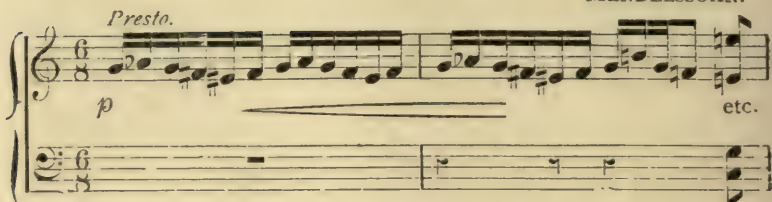
## Ex. 13

*Largo e mesto.*

BEETHOVEN. Op. 10, No. 3.

## Ex. 14.

MENDELSSOHN.



The Chopin example is the only one of those I have instanced which may be called really eccentric, and it is the only one which the untrained eye will memorise without much effort. The other two examples possess individuality, but they are not wilfully peculiar; and the unpractised student will require to exercise a certain amount of prolonged observation and concentrated attention before his eye will retain a picture of what he has been studying. As the student finds his eye becoming more and more trained and under the command of his will, he may safely entrust it to memorize longer passages which do not bear the appearance of being essentially different from other music.

A very good plan, in this connection, is for a student to study a short piece, already made familiar by constant practice, with his eye. He will find this method a good way of attacking the subject, if the one which I have already indicated should fail him altogether.

## VI.

*The Faculty of Emotion*

IN addition to the four faculties I have already mentioned, I think there is another which in no small way assists the memory. I allude to the faculty of *emotion*. A man may have a piece of music in his ears, in his eyes, in his brains, and in the ends of his fingers; but he may not also have it in his soul? I think so. At all events, I have often remembered whole passages of music by means of exercising the faculty of emotion. Let me illustrate this to express my meaning.

If we take an ordinary piece of music (by "ordinary" I mean a simple album leaf, or sketch), and play it over, we notice at once that the ideas it expresses are not all of one colour. We may see gray-haired sorrow in the opening bars, but golden-haired hope is sure to meet us further on. Dull, heavy-coloured ideas are often relieved by thoughts of a warmly-coloured hue. In other words, most pieces of music do not from beginning to end interpret one emotion, but several;

out of one idea grows another, and from the second a third, and so on. And if the piece be a true work of art, well-constructed and sincere, these different emotions will grow one out of the other quite naturally, and they will form a homogeneous whole; one emotion will follow another as naturally and completely as the night follows the day. I do not wish to imply by this that if half-a-dozen composers worked out a theme the different emotions in their compositions would all correspond. Not at all! Allowance must be made for the temperament and mental gifts of the different composers. So easily and naturally in music is the expression of one emotion turned into the expression of another totally dissimilar one, that from one emotion two composers might choose entirely different 'ones to follow the first. If this were not so, one's memorising by the faculty of emotion would be reduced to a mere formula, the expression would be almost as easy to learn as the alphabet; indeed, one would only have to remember a long list of emotions, and remember which was the natural outcome of the one which one was expressing at the moment. No; each composer passes from one mood to another, according to the way in which his temperament directs him.

How, then, does all this assist one in memorising pianforte literature? In this way. When a pianist has gained sufficient mastery over a piece of music as to enable him to play it from beginning to end without blundering, and with comparative ease, he should endeavour to feel the emotion of it as acutely as possible. He should note each separate emotion, and try to perceive why and how they are connected with those that precede and follow them, and when this is



done he will have done all that is necessary. But the reader may say:—"But, even now, I cannot see how all this aids the memory;" Yes, but it does. When a pianist is playing a piece of music without the printed sheet before him, he is very apt to come to a sudden stop and forget what comes next. His eyes, ears, brains, and fingers have deserted him and he does not know what to play. He may remember the emotion that should come next, though he may not remember the notes by means of which he may express the emotion; but if his emotional faculty be sufficiently trained, it will so dominate him as actually to suggest the notes that should be played, and this also in the shortest possible time, so that before he has had time to break down, his emotional faculty has come to the rescue, and he is saved. This faculty of emotion is inherent in every musician worthy of the name, and is undoubtedly often unconsciously exercised by pianists, but I do not remember having seen it stated before as being an aid to memorising music.

I am well aware of the fact that there seem to be quite a large number of people who are quite incapable of experiencing any spiritual emotion whatever; but these people will never make musicians. No matter how keenly they may feel emotions that appeal to their flesh—their sensuality, that will not help them to become great pianists: for music is the most spiritual of all the arts, and gives little or no expression to the hunger of the flesh. But spiritual emotion, the emotion of the soul, is felt by all who make any profession of enjoying music.

It is a very vexed question as to how far a life of wanton immorality dulls the edge of one's spiritual

appetite for music; but it seems to me well within the truth, that he who has no life save the life of the bodily senses, and the satisfying of them, begins to lose perception of all that is greatest and best in music. Beethoven's symphonies become clouded and misty, and the music of Wagner loses depth and meaning. I do not, therefore, think I am stepping outside my province when I advise all readers of these chapters to govern their lives in as simple a manner as possible. Regard mere enjoyment as but a recreation to fit you for your work—let your work itself be your passion, your one reason for existing. This particular remark is intended for the more youthful student; as he or she advances into manhood or womanhood other interests will claim their attention, and rightly so; but during the period of boyhood and youth, one's art should be an absorbing passion. The more one keeps "unspotted from the world," the fitter condition will one's soul be in to appreciate the greatness and nobility of the work of the great composers.

But, on the other hand, there are those who, while being of a decidedly musical temperament, and whilst possessing very fair abilities as pianists, are not able to feel so intensely as those whose nerves are more responsive, more quick to feel, more ready to enjoy. It is safe to prophesy that these musicians, however advanced and well-developed their technique may be, however strong and keen their intellectual force, will never reach the highest summit of their art. For music is founded on the emotions, and if the emotions are not alert, quick to feel and quick to respond, the result of the pianist's efforts will be futile, meagre, and useless. These people will not be able to put their

emotions to such use in memorising music; for unless one feels *acutely*, it is hopeless to expect to be carried away by one emotion on to the next succeeding emotion. However, the other branches of the subject may be studied the harder, in order that what is lost in this particular emotion may be gained in others.

Those of my readers who are in the happy (and yet, for many reasons, unhappy) position of possessing emotional natures, that are continually requiring to be checked and kept within reasonable bounds, will not be under the necessity of training themselves in this faculty. In most cases it is best left alone to guide and point out mechanically and unconsciously; and it is an open question as to whether a too close analysis and observance of it does not destroy some of its power. This point, however, may be left for the wisdom of the individual to settle. In any case, your professor will be able to give you the necessary advice, although your own judgment should rarely, if ever be neglected utterly.

Let me give you an example, to illustrate what I have already said, a well-known, and fairly simple piece of Mendelssohn's—his "Song Without Words"—beginning:

Ex. 15. M. ♩ = 63.

*Adagio non troppo.*

MENDELSSOHN.

*Ped.* ★



enced, and at bar 8 it is much keener and more heartfelt—a kind of mild protest is indulged in, because the absent one cannot be reached. But the second half of bar 9, the whole of bar 10, and the first half of bar 11 repeat the soothing influence of bar 6, and all is rest again. The second half of bar 11 expresses a different emotion—one of manly resignation; bar 12 develops the emotion; but in the middle of bar 13 a half-expressed regret is again evinced, and this is carried through bar 14. Bars 15 and 16 seem to indicate a slight spirit of restiveness—as if the chains of circumstance were proving somewhat irksome.

The student may analyse the remaining emotions for himself; he will see from the foregoing example what I wish to convey to his understanding by this faculty of emotion. Of course, it will be understood that I do not advise that each bar of a piece should be labelled with some particular emotion, and that the names of these different emotions should be learned off by heart in a column; that would be palpably absurd, and of no possible use to the student. But I do insist on the necessity of analysing the emotion of all pieces that the student wishes to memorise. It will be found useful in many cases to invent some slight romance or tale to fit in with the sequence of the emotion in the piece that is being studied; I have known several cases where such a method of procedure has proved invaluable.



## VII.

*On the Selection of a Repertory.*

THIS is a matter that requires the most careful consideration. One's repertory should consist of pieces that represent one's powers, and no piece should be memorised unless it is worth memorising. It is a very bad system to master eighteen or twenty popular pieces of the day, for they very soon drop into that oblivion which they doubtless deserve, and the student then finds it necessary to memorise a fresh repertory every few months. A pianist's repertory should consist of pieces the value of which is undoubted; they should be able to stand the test of years, and last as long as the life of the pianist. I do not advise the total neglect of modern composers, for it is my belief that much excellent work is done every year by living men; but I do say, "Let your repertory be based mainly on the classical composers: let them be your daily bread, your chief means of sustenance. Light composers of the third or fourth rank may then be brought into requisition to fill in the empty nooks

and corners—to garnish the solid feast that has been prepared.”

The first thing to decide is, the extent to which one's repertory is to go; and this, of course, depends on the amount of time that is at the student's disposal, and the use to which he is going to put his pianoforte playing. To strike an average, I will assume that each reader of these pages desires to memorise at least twenty pieces; that is a very fair repertory for an average pianist, but there are many who will wish to go beyond this. In that case, it would perhaps be advisable if they extended their repertory on the lines laid down here; but in this, as in all other branches of this subject of memorising music, the individual pupil's judgment should always be used. Do not despise your own judgment; and, above all, do not accept my advice in these pages, unless it commends itself to you as good and profitable. I take it for granted that you have a fair technique, a fair amount of ambition, and that you are not lacking in common-sense.

It seems to me unnecessary to make out a list of representative pieces that should be memorised by everyone; for even a Beethoven sonata may appeal to one person much more than it does to another of equally good taste and discernment, and it would be worse than useless for a pianist to master a piece which did not particularly appeal to him. Consult your own tastes; but if you do not find that your selection of music does not include any work either of Beethoven, Schubert, Chopin, Schumann, or Mozart, you must make yourself recognise the fact that your taste stands in need of improvement, and that it would be most distinctly advisable to improve it before you attempt to

memorise anything. But yet, on the other hand, do not pretend to like classical music just because you *ought* to like it. Do not rave over a Bach fugue just because it *is* a Bach fugue. Be honest with yourself and your fellow-pianists. And if, finally, you find that you are utterly unable to appreciate any of the work of the great masters of composition, it would be well to recognise the fact that at heart you are not a true musician, and that any enjoyment you or your friends may get from your pianoforte playing will be but enjoyment of a very shallow kind. But it very often happens that a pianist will have a temperament that seems to be set all in one groove. He can appreciate the beauties of one master, but is unable to comprehend the work of another. And this circumstance, though regrettable enough in itself, is not an insurmountable barrier to pianistic success. If, for instance, Chopin appeals to you far more than any other composer, it would be advisable for you to make his works your chief study; but to make them your *only* study would merely make you more narrow than you were before. Do not ignore the other composers altogether, but study those whose works are essentially opposed to Chopin's, and the scope of your temperament or individuality will be widened and your appreciation of Beethoven and Bach will grow more intelligent and keen.

But to take the case of a pianist who has wide tastes and sympathies, what composers should he select? Here, again, the particular pieces may be left for him to choose, the only advice I venture to give being that they should be as representative as possible, and that they should include at least one sonata of Beethoven.

The more representative one's memory is, the better able will one be to entertain different kinds of people.—a well-educated audience being able to appreciate Bach and Beethoven, whilst a not really musical assembly would enjoy the lighter pieces of more modern composers. But don't stoop to memorise mere trash just because you will gain a little ephemeral popularity by being able to play it.

The pieces that form one's repertory may in most cases be divided into two distinct classes:—

(1) Those that we intend to play for our friends and the public, and—

(2) Those that we intend to interpret for ourselves alone.

Most pianists I have met have certain pieces at their finger ends which they never attempt to play in public; they are, perhaps pieces, that for the sake of some association of ideas, are held too sacred for public hearing. But there are some pieces, which by their very nature are unsuited for public performance. They are so deep, so solemn, so thoughtful, that one can interpret them best in the solitude of one's chamber. It is at times such as this when one is communing alone with one of the greater masters of music, that one realises the benefit to be derived from memorising; for when the printed page is absent, one seems to be all the closer to the spirit of the composer one is interpreting, and the music has an added charm and significance.

## VIII.

*On a Method of Study.*

MEMORISING music should be a constant study with all who play any musical instrument; indeed, many of our foremost teachers go so far as to say that every new piece that is learned should be also memorised. I myself do not see any necessity for this as many pieces that one studies are not of sufficient value to be worth committing to memory, and it is nothing less than foolish to store the mind with useless lumber. But it is never advisable to let any of the faculties rust merely for the sake of exercise, and in order to prevent this one should be constantly memorising.

The length of time that should be given to this subject depends, of course, on the opportunities at his disposal. If he can spare four hours a day to the general study of music, then half-an-hour out of this four, at least, should be given to memorising. If, however, the student has as yet no memorised repertory, and is desirous of memorising a dozen or twenty pieces, then he would find that half-an-hour a day is not enough,



and that two hours will be nearer the mark. But each student will decide this matter for himself, according to his individual necessities.

The order in which the different faculties should be developed is perhaps best indicated by the order in which these chapters have been written. Each faculty should be developed separately, and tested separately; proper attention cannot be given if two or three are taken together. A very good plan is to begin by paying particular attention to those faculties which chance to be most highly developed, and when they have reached a fair state of perfection, attention may be directed to the others. A comparatively easy piece should be selected at a first attempt; it should be played over until the student is familiar with it, and as soon as he has learned to play it correctly with the aid of the printed music, of course he should at once begin the work of memorising. The sense of touch will already have done its work more or less unconsciously, as will also the faculty of hearing. If these two faculties chance to be those which are best developed, try to memorise the piece by their aid alone. When this is done, dissect the piece—analyse it—find out how it is constructed. And then, if the piece chosen happens to be a suitable one—that is, happens to be full of emotion and feeling, try to memorise it by the emotions; or better, still, neglect the piece altogether for a few weeks, then play it over once with the aid of the printed music, and then try to play it with the aid of the emotions *alone* as far as possible. It will be impossible to do this entirely by the sole aid of the emotions, of course, because the fingers, the ear, and the intellect have already memorised it; but by keeping these faculties in

abeyance as far as is possible, it can be done to a limited extent.

The faculty of sight should be developed entirely alone without the aid of any of the other faculties. It stands quite by itself, and its development may be carried out on the lines laid down in a previous chapter. It will be a very difficult matter for the student to master this branch thoroughly unless he has the gift direct from Nature, but it is one that is worth mastering, for it is an excellent aid to the other faculties.

As a last word of advice, I should like to say: "Do not be discouraged, no matter how many failures you have." This advice is very trite and conventional, I know, but not one per cent. of our successful musicians have made their positions without following it. Next to talent, perseverance is *everything* in this world. We have all met exceedingly clever men—men, skilful in music, painting, and literature—who, in spite of all their cleverness, have never been successful. Why? Simply because they could never bring themselves to work on and on in spite of failure after failure. And in music we are all sure to make mistakes, but it is by our mistakes that we gain knowledge, and by our failures that we learn to persevere. . . . And success? well, no man ever yet strove for success with all his might and will, and failed to get it—that is, of course, if he had sufficient talent to warrant him in aiming as high as he did. And that is another point to observe. Don't over-estimate your powers—there is nothing more fatal to your happiness in all the world. Aim at what your talents justify you in aiming at; but, on the other hand, don't aim too low.

THE END.











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